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Wendy Elder **32**  
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**Jason Shelden**  
*Publisher*  
 512-921-4701  
 jason.shelden  
 @realproducersmag.com



**Erin Rystad**  
*Content Director*



**Emily Eyob**  
*Operations*



**Carol Whitney**  
*Photographer*



**Rory Hejtmanek**  
*Photographer*



**Leah Faye Blum**  
*Photographer*



**Elizabeth McCabe**  
*Staff Writer*



**Megan Taylor-DiCenzo**  
*Staff Writer*



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## MEET JAY GAGNE

Jay Gagne is a Raymond James financial advisor who began his career back in 1995. He offers his clients more than 29 years of continuous investment management and financial planning expertise. Jay has achieved a Certification from the prestigious Wharton School of Business in Pennsylvania as a Certified Investment Management Analyst (CIMA), which translates to a deep understanding and knowledge of the available financial options for his clients.

Jay has continually been recognized for his achievements, including the following distinctions and honors:

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“

When I finally got my real estate license, I hit the ground running.”

# JESPER TAKTBLAD

is Living the American Dream  
and Thriving in Real Estate

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WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH MCCABE

**J**esper Taktblad, a rising star with The Weiss Group at Compass in Austin, Texas, has a story that spans continents, careers, and cultures. Originally from Sweden, Jesper is forging a path in real estate that exemplifies his commitment to hard work, building meaningful relationships, and exceeding expectations.

“I’ve been doing real estate since 2016,” says Jesper. “In Sweden, you have to study for two to three years to get your real estate license. I started working at Sweden’s biggest brokerage in downtown Stockholm while I was studying. It was a lot of operations and cold calling.”

By 2018, Jesper had his license in hand and was ready to make his mark. “My first full year, in 2019, I sold over 100 transactions and \$45 million in sales. Over the first three years, I did over \$120 million.” This success wasn’t just due to talent—it came from tireless dedication.

“In Sweden, everything had to be done on paper and in person,” he explains. “I’d be bringing clients into the office late at night—sometimes at 11 p.m. But that’s just how the system worked.”

It was also during this time that Jesper met his wife, Renée, who would later become his business partner.







#### A New Chapter in Austin

Jesper first visited Austin in 2014 while working in global music management and fell in love with the city. “I’ve been back every year since 2014. My wife and I met, fell in love, and got married. We decided to move to Austin because the market was so exciting,” he says.

Although the pandemic delayed their plans, Jesper and Renée made the move in the fall of 2021. “It was still COVID, but we decided it was time to take the leap.” Once in Austin, Jesper had to wait for his green card before diving into real estate.

“When I finally got my real estate license, I hit the ground running,” he says. “In January this year, I decided to go all in. I left my other job, and by February, I started doing four to six open houses every weekend.” That’s been his secret to success —meeting cool people and turning them into clients.

This strategy has paid off. Jesper has closed approximately \$5 million in sales

this year and is setting his sights even higher. “Next year, I want to do \$20 to \$25 million.”

#### A Dynamic Duo

Renée, who has lived in Austin for over 20 years, brings a wealth of sales and marketing experience to their partnership. “She has a deep understanding of what makes Austin so unique,” says Jesper. “With her background in Scandinavian fashion and home styling, she brings ambiance and feng shui to the table, which is so important when creating the perfect space.”

Jesper and Renée recently joined forces as business partners. Together, they blend Swedish sensibilities with their shared passion for relationship-building. “We want to make the buying and selling process fun and seamless,” says Jesper. “It’s all about building genuine relationships.”

“

We want to make the buying and selling process fun and seamless.”

#### Beyond Real Estate

Jesper and Renée’s partnership extends beyond business. The couple shares a love of travel, fitness, and outdoor adventures. Jesper, an avid surfer, has trips planned to Costa Rica, Peru, and California. He’s also taken up pickleball and enjoys bike rides around Austin.

With a goal of doubling his production and plans to invest in real estate, Jesper is fully embracing the opportunities that come with living the Austin-American dream. He loves what he does and is excited to continue going all in on his journey.

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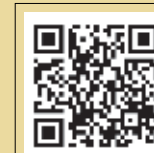
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FROM HOTELS TO HOUSES:

# Meghan Hughes

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH MCCABE

Life is an adventure for those who dare to embrace it—and Meghan Hughes has made a career out of boldly charting new paths. From curating unforgettable experiences at boutique hotels to now navigating the fast-paced world of real estate, Meghan's journey is one of reinvention, innovation, and authentic connections.

Her story is a testament to how passion, creativity, and a willingness to take risks can redefine a career.

#### From Montana to Austin: A Journey of Discovery

Meghan was born in sunny Miami, spent her young years in San Diego, and was ultimately raised in the wilds of Northwest Montana. Meghan's upbringing was anything but conventional. While the laid-back California coast offered her a sense of community, it was the rugged, majestic landscapes of Montana that shaped her adventurous spirit.

"I grew up in Whitefish, Montana, a ski town close to Glacier National Park. It gave me a real appreciation for the outdoors. Growing up we would backpack, ski, and mountain bike at a moment's notice. I learned the value of hard work, resilience, and the beauty of pushing past your comfort zone on some of those epic adventures."

After graduating from the University of Colorado in Boulder, Meghan's wanderlust led her to Whistler, British Columbia, where she lived, worked, and played, and then on a spontaneous road trip to Austin with her childhood best friend. "We wrote a hasty plan on the back of a checkbook, of how we would move to Austin for just one year. With walkie-talkies in hand, we caravanned down together, not knowing we'd end up calling Austin home for the next 20 years!"

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#### From Hospitality to Real Estate: A Leap of Faith

Meghan's career in Austin began in the hospitality industry, where she spent 16 years cultivating unforgettable experiences at the iconic Hotel San José a Bunkhouse hotel on South Congress Ave. Her role helped define the hotel's brand and expand it into new markets—most notably, with the launch of Hotel San Cristobal in Todos Santos, Mexico. She then brought to life the Hotel Magdalena in Austin.

But when the pandemic hit, everything changed. The bustling world of hospitality ground to a halt, and Meghan saw an opportunity to pivot.

Her friend Lisa had been urging her to explore real estate, and Meghan finally decided to take the plunge. "Lisa

introduced me to Noa Levy, who took me under her wing. After I got my license I went with Noa to one of her listings in West Lake Hills. She told me to post a story of the gorgeous property on Instagram, and suddenly, from that one story, I had calls from previous Bunkhouse hotel guests who wanted to move to Austin and buy property—sight unseen."

In a market as competitive as Austin's, the early success was both unexpected and exhilarating. Meghan's first few sales were all well over \$1 million—an impressive feat for anyone starting out in real estate. Soon, the real estate bug had bitten her, and she transitioned full-time into the industry, leaving behind the hotel world she'd known for so long.





**“REAL ESTATE IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST TRANSACTIONS.”**

**Transforming Real Estate: Combining Hospitality and Marketing Savvy**

Today, Meghan is a top-producing real estate agent. Her secret to success? A seamless blend of her hospitality background and her innate marketing and networking instincts.

“Real estate is all about relationships, just like hospitality,” Meghan explains. “It’s about making people feel seen, heard, and understood. I want my clients to feel like they’re a part of something special, whether they’re first-time homebuyers or looking for a beautiful hill country estate.”

Her keen ability to connect to her clients, combined with her strong network and collaborative nature, has set her apart from the competition. “For me, it’s not just about the transaction. It’s about the experience and forging lasting relationships.”

Her commitment to delivering outstanding service has earned her a loyal client base, including repeat business, wonderful reviews, and many referrals. As she puts it: “The best compliment is when a client calls me back to thank me—or when they refer me to a friend.”

Meghan now works with @properties | Christie’s International Real Estate, a brand known for its global reach and top-tier resources. This affiliation allows her to offer unparalleled services to clients, whether they’re buying a starter home or a multimillion-dollar property.

**Balancing Success and Giving Back**

While she’s passionate about her real estate career, Meghan also remains grounded in her values and her commitment to the community. For the past 13 years, she has served on the board of People’s Community Clinic, which provides healthcare services to underserved populations in Austin. She’s also involved in numerous other nonprofit initiatives across the city.

When she’s not working or volunteering, you’ll find Meghan leading a hiking club or staying active with weightlifting and yoga. “Getting my steps in every day is a must,” she says, “and hiking is my favorite way to disconnect and recharge.”

Meghan’s sense of adventure hasn’t slowed down as she’s currently building, from the ground up, a mid-century dream home in Central East Austin. Her 15-year-old Great Dane, Cash, who’s become a beloved part of her story, is pretty excited about his new pad.

**Looking Ahead: A Vision for the Future**

As Meghan looks to the future, her vision for her career remains focused on growth, impact, and balance. “I’m driven by the relationships I build with my clients,” she says. “I love helping people achieve their dreams—whether they’re buying their first home or finding their forever property.”

Her goal is clear: to maintain the personal touch that has made her so successful. “Real estate is about more than just transactions. It’s about creating a special space to gather, fostering brilliant connections, and contributing to the community. That’s what excites me every day.”

With her hospitality-driven service, marketing prowess, and deeply connected community roots, Meghan Hughes is not just making a mark in Austin real estate—she’s reshaping the industry, one heart-filled home at a time.



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**Ashley Long**

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**Miguel Benavides**

Vice President of Sales  
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# Wendy Elder *Free Bird*



WRITTEN BY MEGAN TAYLOR-DICENZO

There's a reason Wendy Elder is called "9-1-1" by her clients; she's there when they need her, and she knows what to do. That's because Wendy has 31 years in the real estate industry and has formed lifelong friendships with clients and colleagues alike.

Born and raised in Texas, Wendy attended the University of North Texas in Denton and cheered for UNT. She earned a degree in Business Real Estate and minored in Spanish. Following graduation, Wendy's aunt, in real estate herself, hired Wendy, and she moved to Austin. She and her husband, Chris, had two beautiful children, Parker and Luke.

Fast forward a few decades and her children are making their mark on the world. Parker graduated from Baylor University, having earned

three degrees in business: risk management, human resources, and insurance. She now works for Lockheed Martin. Luke is a junior at Texas Tech and is considering a future in finance.

"My family is why I do this," Wendy shared. She enjoyed a happy career at Keller Williams for many years until Parker was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. "The key catalyst for my move to Compass was the health insurance we needed for my daughter," Wendy explained. "I just celebrated

five years at Compass and love the technology they have to offer. It's a joy to have the caliber of agents I call my colleagues."

It's not just Wendy's colleagues she's grateful for. "I feel so thankful and blessed to have been able to create this life. Some of my best friends were people moving into town who became my clients; I still text them every day."

Likewise, Wendy enjoys knowing a large community of other agents. "That's the good part about doing this for so long—the agent



connection,” she said. “If I’m ever in a multiple-offer situation, I probably know the other agents.”

With so much experience comes wisdom, which Wendy graciously shares with those around her. “I love shepherding young people,” she said. “I try to explain that real estate looks glamorous on paper and in photos, but it’s not always that. I tell young agents that if they can make it through the first three years, and they’re doing all the right things, they’re probably going to be OK. It’s not easy, though—it just looks easy from the outside.”

She offers the following advice as well: “You have to love people to do this job. I truly believe the reason I’ve been successful is that I put my clients first—regardless of the outcome for me. The money comes; it takes care of itself. Just put the clients first.”

At the same time, Wendy is learning to put Chris and herself first at home in this new phase of life. “I prefer not to call myself an empty nester,” Wendy explained. “I am a free bird.”

She and Chris recently celebrated 25 years of marriage. He built a house on five acres of land in Dripping Springs in 2023,

and we were blessed to purchase our family beach house which has been in the family for 3 generations. “We’re looking forward to bouncing around,” Wendy shared. “I love to negotiate, and I can do that from anywhere. When I negotiate something great for my clients, I feel fired up.” Wendy also loves going to local

“

I just celebrated five years at Compass and love the technology they have to offer. It’s a joy to have the caliber of agents I call my colleagues.”



**FIFTY CLICKS**  
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“  
I prefer not to call  
myself an empty nester.  
I am a *Free Bird.*”

antique shops and taking day trips to Fredericksburg, Lockhart, and other places around Austin.

Another passion for Chris and Wendy is the work they do with their church, Hope Rock Church, at their home campuses in Lakeway and Johnson City. Chris is a worship leader and both he and Wendy serve as Deacons. Wendy exclaimed, “We love serving the Kingdom by loving others.”

For Wendy, representing clients as they are buying and selling properties is an honor that she never takes for granted. She is a Certified Negotiating Expert (CNE) who merged talents with Chris and became the president of their custom home-building company, Chris Elder Homes. Together, they have sold 150+ of their custom homes.

Whether families are just starting out, caring for young ones, in the “free bird” phase of life, or beyond, Wendy knows exactly how to care for them. She’s their emergency go-to REALTOR® with decades of experience, an impeccable reputation, and a big smile. As one of the most awarded agents in Austin with a proven track record of success, you’re in good hands when you call Wendy.



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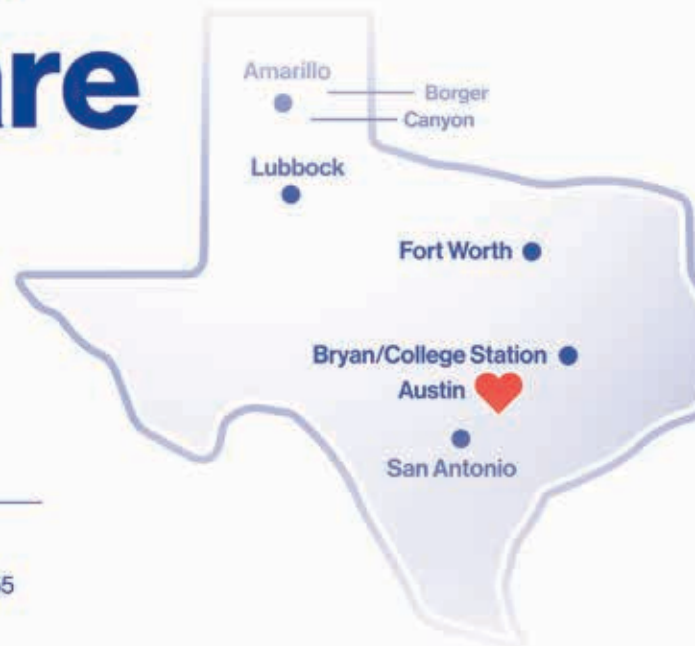
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